



Above, left—Indoor circus at the clubhouse. Plenty of things going on keep time from hanging heavily on people's hands at Locust Valley. Above, right—The Matinecock community house at Locust Valley. New York. It was erected with money subscribed in the village and surrounding country. This beautiful building is now the center of all community affairs. Insert—The old barn which was the forerunner of the present-day community building. One good thing begets another. The boys made such good use of the club established in this barn that the fine modern building seemed a necessity. Below, left—The stage at the Matinecock community house. All sorts of home talent performances are given here, with great success. Below, right—There are all sorts of winter sports in this community.

DO YOU ever wish for a place where the people of your little town or community can get together and have a good time? Something to take the place of the old-time and now obsolete quilting bees and barn dances so common to our boyhood days?

Come with me to the village of Locust Valley, out on Long Island, New York, just a little this side of Oyster Bay, the home of Colonel Roosevelt for so many years. We are visiting the Matinecock community clubhouse where everybody in the village and surrounding country is welcome. It is the veritable center of community life, with reading rooms, bowling alleys, billiard room, motion picture theater, tennis court, croquet ground, and spacious veranda. It is a delightful little clubhouse, like a country home set well back from the road on a little hill surrounded by trees. Flower boxes are scattered about and there are comfortable chairs out on the porch. This is a club for common people.

All contribute to the support of the club according to their ability. The well-to-do, some of whom own country estates, give as much as \$200 a year. There are others who give a hundred, or fifty or twenty-five, or ten, and many young persons working for wages who give only a few dollars. When the clubhouse was erected, everyone helped out. The carpenters and artisans working on the building each Saturday donated part of their week's wages, while others with more money than time, gave the money. And yet it was by no means a prohibitive venture, the building costing about \$30,000.

It must not be thought that erecting this clubhouse is the sole achievement of this remarkable community. For a great many years the people have co-operated in many ways to advance the interests of the village. For one thing, they beautified the station grounds, which like many another little town, were none too well kept. Then they established a self-supporting library. A bad swamp was changed into a beautiful lake. Glee clubs, choral societies, cooking schools, a kindergarten—later taken over by the school—a bathing pavilion, all were accomplished through community effort. There is probably no village anywhere where such good times are had as in the Matinecock community. In the winter there are ice carnivals, bobsled parties, dancing schools, parties of all sorts, musical programs and community get-togethers. In the open season there are clambakes, dances, and all kinds of outdoor sports.

This great development of community spirit came about in two ways. About 12 years ago the Matinecock Neighborhood Association was organized by a group interested in improving the community. By 1912 the membership of this association had grown to more than 100. It sought and obtained better roads. Country lanes on private property were also opened up for walking or riding. A sewing school was held on Saturday afternoon. Mosquito extermination was carried on.

About this time there entered E. Fred Eastman, pastor of the local church. He had been engaged to devote part of his time to the association. Then 53 young men petitioned to be taken in as part of the recreational department of the association. This marked the beginning of the clubhouse idea.

The first association clubhouse was an old barn

A Club for the Common People

By R. P. CRAWFORD

rented for \$10 a month which these young men proceeded to fit up for a club. There was no place that the young people could meet and have a good time. The barn was fitted up with a vestibule, dance floor, and partition. The people in the community were then asked to equip it with such useful articles as they had discarded. When the hat had been passed it was found that the following articles were available: stove, chandeliers, phonograph, dishes, chimney, indoor baseball set, pool table, five leather chairs, whitening for walls, piano, pianola, tables and 24 chairs, boxing gloves, reading lamp, window shades, three and a half dozen glasses, an oil stove, 15 yards of matting, five folding chairs, \$137 in cash, and subscriptions to a number of magazines. The boys' athletic club which had existed previously turned over its entire equipment.

From 20 to 40 boys made use of this clubroom every evening. A dance or party was given every two weeks and on these occasions from 60 to 110 persons responded. Boy Scouts and ball teams were organized. Seven and a half months found 148 young men interested in the organization, paying their expenses, and furnishing suppers, dances, parties, and athletics to their fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters. A band was organized and later an employment department was established.

It is quite a jump to the fine community building which now graces the hillside. It was only a little while until the people began to think in bigger figures. Every family in Locust Valley contributed to the building, some with labor, some with money, and most with both money and labor.

The community house is a frame structure, painted white, and set well back among the trees. When one climbs the shady walk that leads to the house, he comes upon a wide veranda, with easy chairs scattered about. The door opens into a little office and from there into the recreation rooms. There are billiard tables, and a nook of the larger room is reserved for reading. On one side of the main room is a large fireplace. At one end is a well-equipped stage where numerous home talent performances are given. Downstairs there are bowling alleys. Outside are the tennis court and croquet ground. The village fire engines are kept in the basement of the community house, which serves as the headquarters of the fire department. All year round this building is in use. It is open every week day from 9 o'clock in the morning until 11 o'clock at night, and on Sundays from 2 to 11 o'clock. Wednesday and Saturday evenings are motion picture nights.

Dancing classes were started. Two women gave lessons, and the enrollment soon jumped to more than a hundred, with the class divided into three sections. Fifteen cents a lesson was charged.

When Arbor Day rolled round each child was given a small shrub to plant. For five years the association had conducted a successful bathing cottage on the

seashore that a near-by town was persuaded to vote \$10,000 for the erection of a large pavilion there. In fact, all the people through this section co-operate.

One year work was slack during the winter months for the carpenters and so a guild was organized to manufacture garden furniture. This was made from standard plans and sold to the residents of Long Island and people the country over at market prices. Four to six carpenters were kept busy during the winter months in the old barn which formerly had been the community house. Kindergarten, sewing, cooking, and manual training classes were started as community projects and later turned over to the public school.

A great deal of attention has been given to music by the community with a choral society, glee club, and public concerts. Various successful men from New York City have given personal talks to the young men of the community in small groups. The association has also taken upon itself the task of looking after the poor and sick of the community. During an epidemic of infantile paralysis a hospital was established. An old home in the village was volunteered for the purpose, thoroughly cleaned and put in shape. Twenty-seven cases were treated in the hospital and the percentage of mortality was less than eight per cent, while it was 26 per cent in New York City.

Winter sports attract attention and four thousand persons attended one ice carnival. Skating races, ice boat races, hockey games, and toboggan contests are held all winter long.

The Matinecock community canning kitchen was operated when the conservation of food seemed urgent. Boy Scouts and Camp Fire girls are a matter of course. A baby parade was held in July, 1919, an event which evoked plenty of home interest.

Here is the creed for Locust Valley and the Matinecock community club, which Mr. Eastman, who did so much to arouse community interest, wrote:

"I believe in Matinecock.

"I believe in its Past—in the men and women who have lived before me, whose toil made the land productive, whose common sense laid out a good road system, whose foresight founded our schools, whose devotion built our churches, whose love raised up children to serve God and their country.

"I believe in its Present—in the men and women and children about me whose working together in courage and perseverance has wrought results of which I am proud; a public school well equipped and efficient, a library where the treasures of past and present await to enrich me, a bathing pavilion for my neighbors and me forever, a neighborhood building where friendship and music and thought inspire me. . . . I believe in the spirit of good will and neighborliness that brought these things to pass.

"I believe in its Future—in the men and women who will come after me. I believe that what has been done is only the beginning of a greater work that will be done, that the next generation will be better and nobler than this, that out of our hopes and labors now will grow a community democratic, prosperous and strong, an honor to America and to God."